11

A

SERMON

Preached before the

694.9.3.
110

SONS of the CLERGY,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH of St. *PAUL*,

On *FRIDAY*, *May* 3, 1751.

By *ARNOLD KING*, L. L. B.
RECTOR of St. MICHAEL, CORNHILL.

K

To which is annexed,

A LIST of the Annual Amount of the Collections for this CHARITY, from the Year 1721.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN WHISTON, and BENJ. WHITE, at *Boyle's Head*, in *Fleet-Street*; and Sold also by J. BROTHERTON in *Cornhill*. 1751.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

TO THE

Rev. Mr. EGERTON, Dean of *Hereford.*
Rev. GERARD NEDEN, D. D.
Rev. ROGER PETTIWARD, D. D.
Rev. NICOLAS BRADY, L. L. B.
Rev. CHARLES LYDDELL, M. A.
Rev. SHERLOCK WILLIS, M. A.
RICHARD SMALBROKE, L. L. D.
PETER DENIS, Esq;
GEORGE PERROT, Esq;
CHARLES-HENRY TALBOT, Esq;
Mr. DANIEL FOX.
Mr. JOHN WHISTON.

THE WORTHY

STEWARDS

For the late FEAST of the

SONS of the CLERGY,

THIS

SERMON,

Preached and Printed at their REQUEST,

Is INSCRIBED, with all due Reſpect,

By their moſt affectionate,

And humble Servant,

May 6,
1751.

ARNOLD KING.

II KINGS, Chap. IV. Ver. I.

Now there cried a certain Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets unto Eliſha, ſaying, Thy Servant my Husband is dead, and thou knoweſt that thy Servant did fear the Lord: and the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bondmen.

THE Reaſon of our aſſembling here this Day is a melancholy one, but the End of it is pleaſant and delightful; it is to celebrate a rational and religious Feſtival, a Feaſt of Love, where Chearfulneſs is ſanctified by Charity, and Society ſweetened by Goodwill; where the Voice of Joy and Gladneſs ſpreads itſelf throughout the whole Solemnity, becauſe the Heart of the Mourner is refreſhed, and the ſorrowful Sighing of the Poor is turned into Comfort and Rejoicing.

THAT we may effectually accompliſh this truly noble Deſign, we need but apply the Story in the Text to our preſent Meeting, which muſt naturally excite a Spirit of Compaſſion and Generoſity, anſwerable to the Wants of thoſe, who are to be relieved by it.

THE Application that is here made to *Eliſha* by a poor Widow, with Regard to herſelf and her diſtreſſed Children,

has ſomething in it very tender and affecting, the Death of her Huſband, and the Neceſſity of giving up her Children to Bondage for the Payment of his Debts, being the miſerable Cauſe of her Complaint.

BUT, leſt the Poverty of her Condition might be imputed to her Huſband's Impiety or Extravagance, ſhe immediately obviates this Objection, *Thou knoweſt that thy Servant did fear the Lord*, that he worſhipped the true God, in Oppoſition to the idolatrous *Iſraelites*, and was ſtrictly obedient to all his Commandments.

HOWEVER, this Reflection, notwithſtanding it might alleviate, could not wholly remove that heavy Affliction, ſhe was ready to ſink under, from the Remembrance of her former Happineſs, and the Dread of ſeeing her two Sons condemned to Bondage, in order to ſatisfy the hard, tho' juſt Demands of her Creditors.

WHAT little Ability ſhe had to anſwer theſe Demands, appeared from her Reply to *Eliſha:* When he aſked her the Queſtion, *What haſt thou in the Houſe?* ſhe anſwered him in the Humility of her Heart, *Thine Handmaid hath not any Thing in the Houſe, ſave a Pot of Oil.*

UPON this moving Repreſentation of her calamitous Circumſtances, God, who is always ready to raiſe up Friends to thoſe who have been his faithful Servants, and to deliver their Families from that Weight of Miſery, which, without his Aſſiſtance, would bear too hard upon them, mercifully impowered *Eliſha* to increaſe the Widow's Pot of Oil to ſuch a Quan-

a Quantity, as was not only ſufficient to ſatisfy her Huſband's Debts, but to maintain her, and her Children afterwards; for when ſhe came, and told the Man of God how her Oil was increaſed, he ſaid, *Go ſell the Oil, and pay thy Debt, and live thou and thy Children upon the reſt.*

THE Perſon, whoſe Death is ſo much lamented, was an holy Man, one of the Sons of the Prophets, of an inferior religious Order, who was appointed to aſſiſt the Prophet in the Adminiſtration of his Office; and the peculiar Excellencies, by which he is principally diſtinguiſhed, ſeem to have been theſe, a reſolute Attachment to the true God, a conſcientious Obedience to his Commandments, and a careful Education of his Children in an uniform Courſe of Goodneſs, both by his Inſtruction and Example.

NOW, if with *this* we compare *their* Character and Situation, who were the Huſbands and Fathers of thoſe, for whoſe Sake we are now aſſembled, I think it will be no Preſumption to ſay, that we ſhall find the moſt exact Reſemblance between them.

THE Clergy of the Church of *England* have frequently exerted the ſame laudable Reſolution in oppoſing the furious Zeal of a tyrannical Government, and ſuperſtitious Worſhip, and have ſhewn themſelves ſtrenuous Friends to Liberty, when the moſt illegal and unwarrantable Power was exerted to break their Spirits, and terrify them into Submiſſion. The firm and conſtant Behaviour of many of them is too notorious to be repeated, tho' I could wiſh, it always may be remembered, as an illuſtrious Proof, that there have been Men of

this Profeſſion ready to ſacrifice all temporal Conſiderations, for the Preſervation of their Country, and in Defence of that Liberty, *wherewith Chriſt hath made them free.*

IT were an injudicious, and indeed a very uſeleſs Undertaking to magnify the Dignity of their Function, ſince the Excellence of a Profeſſion, without the Worthineſs of its Profeſſors, would certainly be an Argument againſt them; but I can do more than this, by appealing to the Memory of the preſent, as well as to the Hiſtory of former Times, which will furniſh us with very convincing Evidence, that the Clergy of our Church have been eminent for their ſound Learning and exemplary Virtue, doing their Duty in the Fear of the Lord; famous for a ſteady Adherence to the Eſtabliſhment, of which they are Members; and, at the ſame Time, not leſs diſtinguiſhed for their charitable Temper towards all who differ from them; judiciouſly conſidering, that a ſincere and univerſal Benevolence is the natural and only Parent of Harmony and Union. In this they have not only ſhewn their Charity and Goodneſs, but their Wiſdom and Judgment, and ſuch ſuperior Merit will always meet with ſuperior Approbation and Reverence.

IT is farther Matter of Commendation, that, while in ſo many other Reſpects they have been ſhining Lights to the World, they have alſo been careful, not only to ſet before their Children ſo prevailing an Example, but to give them ſuch an Education, as may teach them to eſteem and practiſe that Virtue, in which their Fathers have been ſo painfully exerciſed.

BUT,

BUT, if the Character of the Clergy in general does happily reſemble that of the Prophet's Son in Piety and all other Virtues, they in particular, whoſe diſtreſſed Families are the Occaſion of this Aſſembly, did but too much help to compleat the Parallel, by reſembling him in their inferior Situation among the reſt of their Brethren.

AND we ſhall not wonder to ſee their Sons and Daughters preſenting their Petitions to us for our Bounty, if we do but recollect, how ſmall a Proviſion there is in the Church, compared with the great Number of thoſe, who are to be maintained by it; in Conſequence of which, there muſt neceſſarily be many, who, far from being capable of ſparing for their Children, can but barely ſubſiſt themſelves, and that even with the greateſt Frugality, and ſtricteſt Self-denial. To this we may add, that the extraordinary Increaſe of Expence in almoſt all the Neceſſaries of Life for ſeveral Years paſt, particularly in populous Cities, has abſolutely diſabled them from laying up ſuch a Portion out of their Income, as Prudence and parental Affection require at their Hands.

AS to any cruel and unnatural Suggeſtions, that a Clergyman ought to be of ſo ſevere and recluſe a Behaviour, as to have nothing to do with worldly Engagements, and that conſequently there is no Neceſſity for his being at any ſuperfluous Expence, it is an Opinion founded neither in Reaſon nor Religion. That he is to have no Concern in the Follies and Vices of the World is very true, but to conclude from thence, that he is to withdraw himſelf from all Society, ſeems

to

to be contradictory to the very End of his Profeſſion, which is to ſhew the Beauty and Excellence of Virtue by his own Practice, and which can never be done ſo effectually, as by convincing Mankind from his Example, that Religion is the only Means of enjoying Pleaſure, as well as keeping Innocence, that not only *her Paths are Peace, but that all her Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs.* Our bleſſed Lord recommends and ſanctifies this Behaviour in his own Perſon; and, tho' we may ſometimes, like our Maſter, be condemned for our free, but innocent Converſation, as Friends to Publicans and Sinners, yet we ſhall find his Words true in the End, that *Wiſdom is juſtified of all her Children.*

THIS comfortable Aſſurance will anſwer all ſuch Objections; and we ſhall find, upon a fair Enquiry, that the Diſtreſſes of the beſt Men in this Profeſſion will be worthy of the moſt affectionate Regard, as they are often brought upon them by a zealous Exerciſe of the moſt eminent Virtues; while they labour, *that their Poverty may abound unto the Riches of their Liberality*, by being emulous to ſhew forth that Charity, which the Goſpel ſo ſtrongly inculcates, it will be at leaſt a pardonable Want of Foreſight, if their Chriſtian Benevolence ſhould ſometimes overcome their worldly Prudence ſo far, as imperceptibly to increaſe the Inconveniencies, to which they were before too liable from the Narrowneſs of their Fortune; for however improper it may be for Perſons in ſuch confined Circumſtances to do Acts of Generoſity, yet ſuch is the Goodneſs of ſome Men's Hearts, that they are led to aſſiſt the Wants of others even at the Hazard of their own Happineſs; and, tho' the worldly-wiſe may conſider

ſider this merely as a Weakneſs, every good Man will look upon it to be ſuch a *kind* of Weakneſs, as demands our Pity, and deſerves our Aid.

WHEN ſuch a Perſon, in ſuch a Situation, void of all Means to ſecure any other Intereſt for himſelf, or his Dependants, but the Favour of God, and his divine Protection of them by a conſcientious Diſcharge of the Duties of his Function; when ſuch a one, I ſay, ſo truly reſpectable, is taken from them, their Situation muſt become very deplorable, and be too much like that of the afflicted Family before us, encompaſſed with Miſery and diſtreſſed by Want.

THE Widow is no longer able to be a Nurſing-Mother to her Children, but loaded with Cares, and broken perhaps with Infirmity, muſt ſink under the Weight of her Affliction, unleſs the Anguiſh of her Heart is aſſuaged, and the Loſs of her Maintenance, ſuch as it was, ſupplied by your Affection and Munificence; her Children too, tho' they cannot now be ſold to Bondage, yet are in Danger of being expoſed to all the Snares, that Idleneſs and Penury can lay before them, except ſome Support is continued, and their Education made uſeful by your generous and well-timed Liberality.

IT is ſtill an Aggravation of their Wretchedneſs, and which you will do well to remember, that their former Manner of Life has given them a Feeling and Senſibility of their Calamities, to which the inferior Poor are not ſubject. Thoſe, who have lived in Character and Credit, who have been attended and applied to with any, tho' ever ſo ſmall, Degree of

of Reſpect and Honour, and who are in an Inſtant deprived of ſuch an happy Situation, muſt be dreadfully affected by ſo ſevere an Alteration, and conſequently have a ſtronger Claim to your Aſſiſtance, than if they had never taſted the Happineſs of ſuch ſuperior Comfort.

To be born to Poverty has nothing in it very terrible, becauſe we are inured from our Infancy to ſuch laborious Services, as are ſuited to the Meanneſs of our Station, and conſtant Habit makes them familiar and eaſy; but to have poſſeſſed ſuch a Share of the Conveniencies of Life, as to have lived upon a Level with the Generality of Mankind, and to ſink at once beneath the loweſt, carries Terror in the Apprehenſion, and Deſpair in the Experience of it, and is a Condition irrecoverably miſerable, if the Compaſſionate and Beneficent do not exert their Goodneſs, and bountifully provide ſome Relief.

THIS Reflection will, I doubt not, be an effectual Reaſon with you to conſider and eaſe the Weight of ſuch Woe, will increaſe your Charity, and make you extend your compaſſionate Concern ſo far as to heal the broken-hearted, and ſuſtain their ſinking Spirits, will teach you to commiſerate the Condition of the diſconſolate Widow, and her wretched Children, who now pine in ſecret, and mourn for the Death of him, whoſe pious and indulgent Care had hitherto made every Hardſhip light and eaſy to them, and whoſe unblemiſhed Character commanded Reſpect to himſelf, and derived to them Regard and Countenance from their Superiors.

THE

THE Loſs of an indulgent Huſband, and an affectionate Father, cannot but be very afflicting even to thoſe, whoſe Condition is rich and powerful; how much more ſhocking muſt it be to the Fatherleſs and the Widow, when they are oppreſſed with Poverty, and deſtitute of Friends!---If there is Pity in you, you will not; if there is Nature in you, you cannot reſiſt ſo forcible an Application.

TO anſwer ſuch an Application with any common Excuſes is uncharitable, but to ſuppoſe, that the Wants of our Fellow-creatures have no Title to our Aſſiſtance, becauſe Providence has made an unequal Diſtribution of it's Bleſſings, this is not only uncharitable, but impious: God Almighty, like a gracious Maſter, or rather, like an indulgent Father, has made a plentiful Proviſion for all his Servants and Children, and if any of them are left in Diſtreſs, the Fault will be in thoſe, who have been unworthy Stewards of the Talent committed to them for Improvement, not in Him, who is the bounteous Giver of all good Gifts. The different Stations which He has appointed in this Life, are ordained for the Exerciſe of different Virtues, and the Rich are as much obliged to Generoſity and Love, as the Poor are to Gratitude and Humility, and *if any mourn in Sion*, thoſe, who have Abilities to ſuccour them, will be accountable for it, if they are not comforted.---The common Ties of Humanity bind us to ſuch Compaſſion, and it will not be ungenerous, but unnatural to behold their Sufferings with Indifference and Neglect.

BUT the Chriſtian Religion, which raiſes every moral Virtue to its higheſt Perfection, enforces a Compliance with that Kind of Charity, to which we are now called, by the ſtrongeſt Reaſoning, and moſt ſacred Example. There is not the minuteſt Part of our Saviour's Hiſtory, in which we are not continually inſtructed, that his whole Employment, while on Earth, was to adminiſter Comfort to the Diſtreſſes, and Remedy to the Wants of all who were afflicted, for *he went about doing Good*; and this Example was intended for our Admonition, to recommend to us, in the moſt effectual Manner, the Amiableneſs and Excellence of thoſe Chriſtian Graces, which directly tend to the Benefit of our Brethren, to our own Honour, and to the Glory of God.

SURELY then thoſe, who profeſs this Religion, *who are of the ſame Houſhold of Faith, who eat the ſame ſpiritual Meat, and drink the ſame ſpiritual Drink*, who are honoured with the happy Privilege of being *Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Chriſt*, who are raiſed from Death to Life, from Corruption to Immortality, and are delivered from the Slavery of Sin by the ſame merciful Redeemer, cannot forbear ſhewing that charitable Diſpoſition, which is to be the great and diſtinguiſhing Mark of their being his Diſciples.---Shall we turn back to the Records of Heathen Antiquity, where we may trace the moſt affectionate and diſintereſted Acts of Humanity and Love; and ſhall a Chriſtian ſee a Chriſtian in Bonds or Affliction, without attending to his Complaints, and uſing his utmoſt Abilities to deliver him from them?---As Men, we are inclined to Mercy, as Chriſtians, we are obliged to it.

THERE

THERE is ſtill another Inducement remaining to be conſidered, which is, that we are PROTESTANT Chriſtians, reformed from the Superſtition and Errors, which, among us, too long defaced the Beauty of Primitive Holineſs, and repreſented the Chriſtian Inſtitution, as a Religion full of Gloomineſs and Terror; PROTESTANTS, who live in a Country, where the Intereſts of Religion and Liberty are ſo cloſely interwoven, that he who is a Patron of the one, muſt always be a Defender of the other, and will therefore, if he is in Earneſt, be ready to extend his Influence, and beſtow his Fortune for the comfortable Relief of their Families, who muſt always be Friends to their Country from their near Alliance to the Religion, that is eſtabliſhed in it.

WILL it not then be an Act of Wiſdom, as well as Goodneſs, to give all imaginable Encouragement for the Continuance of that Order of Men, who muſt be ſo neceſſarily ſerviceable to the Support of Government, and to take all decent Care for the Maintenance of their Poſterity, who are ſo many uſeful Members added to the Community; Benefits particularly ariſing from the Excellence of our Conſtitution, and which are the natural Effects of a married Clergy?

IT were, I hope, a very unneceſſary Waſte of Time to make any Addreſs to the Clergy upon this Occaſion; they cannot deſert their own Cauſe, they muſt contribute, according to the Ability God has given them, to theſe diſtreſſed Relicts of their Brethren, brought up in the ſame religious Nurture, and dignified with the ſame honourable Employment.

AND, that the future Diſtreſſes of their own Families, if *any ſhould* happen to them, may meet with the ſame Aſſiſtance from others, let them give the faireſt and beſt Recommendation of this Work of Love, by being inſtructive Examples of Piety and Learning, Meekneſs and Humility, Sobriety and Diſcretion, and of all thoſe excellent Virtues, which adorn the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*. So ſhall they enlarge the Bounty of every pious Benefactor, by ſupplying him with this happy Reflection, that he has extended his Liberality to thoſe deſtitute Children, whoſe Parents have deſerved it; ſo will they take away the Reproach of their Enemies, and juſtify the good Intention of their Friends, at the ſame Time ſecuring Honour to themſelves, and Bleſſings to their Poſterity; for there is no Man, whoſe Nature is not hardened by Vice, will be able to ſtop his Ears againſt the Cries of theſe Innocents, when he ſhall hear the melting Eloquence of this pathetick Lamentation, *We are Orphans, and Fatherleſs, and our Mother is a Widow, and thou knoweſt that our Father did fear the Lord.*

THE good Man in the Text procured a Bleſſing to his Family by this very Method, by the Holineſs of his own Life, and by teaching his Children to excell in the ſame Works of Righteouſneſs, for we may certainly conclude from the Prophet's being ſent for their miraculous Preſervation, that they were Objects worthy of the divine Favour. It was the Merit of the deceaſed Father, and the Innocence of his diſtreſſed Houſhold, which derived the Mercy of God upon them, and delivered them from their deſperate Situation: And it muſt be the ſame perſonal Goodneſs in the Clergy,

and

and the ſame religious Care of their Children, which muſt engage the *Mercy of Heaven* to raiſe up Friends for their Deliverance, and influence the Great and Wealthy to uſe their Affluence and Power for their Protection and Support.

THE Age, we live in, is remarkable for it's Charity upon every proper Occaſion, and there is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the Clergy alone will be excepted from the Benefits of this noble and generous Spirit; and as the moſt natural Encouragement to ſuch Generoſity, I muſt remind you, that, in recommending this Charity, I am but ſpeaking in Behalf of your own Brethren, and your own Children, for there is hardly a Family of any Conſequence in the Kingdom, that has not, at ſome Time or other, been related to the Clergy.

LET every Man, therefore, be an *Eliſha* to the diſtreſſed Widow, let him deliver the Mother from Lamentation, and her Sons from Bondage; let him bring ſuch afflicting Circumſtances home to himſelf, and conſider the tender Partner of his own Heart, ſtruggling under the ſame Calamity, and the dear Pledges of his virtuous Affection left naked, deſtitute, and afflicted; let the dreadful Apprehenſions of ſuch diſtracting Sorrow ſink deeply into his Soul, and he will not be able to withſtand the compaſſionate Emotions he will feel there; they will call aloud for the Largeneſs of his Bounty, and earneſtly plead in Favour of that Miſery, to which his own Children may be ſubject, notwithſtanding all his Care and Sollicitude, all his Watchfulneſs and Induſtry to procure that Fortune, and preſerve that Independence, which he intends as their future Defence againſt

Servility

Servility and Want; for *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*; the moſt cautious Prudence is not always ſecure from Diſappointment, nor the moſt ſpotleſs Innocence from Diſtreſs.—Remember this all ye, that paſs by, and as ye hope for Pity under your own Affliction, do not deny it to thoſe who are now afflicted, *for with what Meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.*

UPON the whole then, what Argument can be produced againſt the Reaſonableneſs of your Beneficence, but a Doubt concerning the Diſtribution of it? And all Suſpicions of this Sort are ſufficiently anſwered by the faithful Account, that is annually ſubmitted to the Publick, by which you may be fully ſatisfied, that the Intention of your Liberality is ſtrictly complied with.

MANY have been relieved from the Contributions upon this annual Solemnity, yet there are many ſtill remaining, who want Relief; *the Pot of Oil* is not yet increaſed to that Fulneſs, as to remove, much leſs to prevent the Wants of thoſe who apply for your Aſſiſtance.

MAY God Almighty multiply it to ſuch Abundance, that every Neceſſity may be ſupplied, and every Heart comforted! May each ſucceeding Year bring additional Improvement to this Charity, ſo that *all may eat, and be filled*, till at laſt it ſhall pleaſe God to deliver them from this State of Vexation and Poverty, and exalt them to his Heavenly Kingdom, *where they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, where the Lamb, that is in the Midſt of the Throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them to living Fountains of Waters; and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes!* Amen!

FINIS.

THE STEWARDS for the preſent Year thought it would be agreeable to the Publick, to ſee a LIST of the Annual Amount of this very uſeful Charity as compleat as they could procure it, commencing with 1721. By which will be perceived, how much in general it has encreaſed from the Approbation and Bounty of the Publick, and which we hope it will continue to do, ſo as to equal the Wants of thoſe it was calculated to provide for.

	l.	s.	d.
1721	330	16	
1722	328	16	
1723	382	6	
1724	566	10	
1725	630	5	
1726	575	4	
1727	651		
1728	595	17	9
1729	523	6	11
1730	722	6	4
1731	840	1	
1732	951	1	3
1733	909	6	
1734	1000	3	
1735	850	5	3
1736	837	7	
1737	856	9	7
1738	935	2	7
1739	912	11	3
1740	784	1	6
1741	834	2	
1742	866	6	2
1743	819		
1744	848	16	9
1745	1044		
1746	922	10	6
1747	1062	2	
1748	916	6	6
1749	985	12	6
1750	1134	14	
1751	1157	9	

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